

Examiners' Report/ Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2010

GCSE

GCSE Arabic (5AR02)

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Unit 2 - Speaking

The topics included in this new specification are highly relevant and suitable to the purposes and levels of this speaking test. They are suitable for candidates, especially those who speak Arabic as a Foreign Language.

Although the instructions on how to conduct the test are clear and straightforward, there are still great variations between centres regarding both the conduct of the exam and the elicitation of student responses. Here are some of the observations made during the marking period:

There are many teachers who follow a strict order of questions as found in the Sample Assessment Materials without any change or variation, which though acceptable, may still not show the candidates real performance abilities.

Some teachers paraphrase the questions in the dialects of the pupils, thus affecting the quality of spoken language produced by the candidates.

Many teachers use their own dialects, rather than Modern Standard Arabic, thus causing considerable confusion for the candidates.

Some teachers are happy to accept monologues or presentations throughout the tests, without any attempt at interrupting to offer variations and question/answer communication.

In one instance, the teacher accepted only one topic out of two, therefore omitting one whole topic.

Some centres with quite a considerable number of candidates seem to have pre-prepared a whole group with similar questions and without variations or differentiation.

Sometimes teachers do not give enough time for the candidates to fully respond to a question. Instead, they interrupted them with new questions before the candidate completed his/her points.

Administration

A couple of centres did not send the attendance registers.

Many centres missed the Mark Record Sheets, which proved to be a major problem for marking and recognising the topics discussed during the exam. This also meant that the candidates did not sign the authenticity sheet. This is serious, as it does not show clearly whether the same candidates did the tests themselves.

Many centres did not complete the Mark Record Sheets fully, leaving some important parts of it unfilled (e.g. the topic order, the centre details, the name of the examiner). Topics must be recorded on the Mark Record Sheets by the teacher conducting the exams.

Many teachers marked the test and recorded their marks on the Mark Record Sheets, thus misinterpreting the instructions in the Specification.

Many centres did not wrap their envelopes securely, thus some tapes/covers were damaged during posting.

Many teachers did not place the microphone close enough to the candidates, thus recording their own voices clearer and louder than those of their candidates. In some cases, the candidates' voices were hardly audible.

Many pupils were too quiet during the recording and were not advised to speak louder.

Many tapes were not rewound to the beginning.

Some tapes were badly labelled, causing a lot of confusion. Also many tapes were stopped half way through side A at the end of a test, turned over and the next test started midway through side B. This is confusing to examiners who assume that any new recording should naturally start at the beginning of the tape.

Suggestions and Recommendations:

One major reason for the problems mentioned above is a lack of training experienced by teacher conductors of the tests.

There are a good number of centres that had teachers who are fully experienced and were thus competent in their conduct of the test. However, not all centres had that experience.

Many teachers lacked basic knowledge of Arabic. Some centres had candidates who were far better at speaking Arabic than their teachers.

Teachers should be advised to put the microphone closer to the candidate.

Centres must complete the Mark Record Sheets - completed in full and signed by both the teacher and candidate.

When contacted, many of the centres who did not send the Mark Record Sheets did not even know about these forms and asked for a copy to be faxed to them. This clearly shows that such centres did not read through their instructions well. All instructions and forms can be found on the GCSE 2009 Arabic page of the Edexcel website www.edexcel.com

Despite the above mentioned-problems and concerns, it must be acknowledged that there were many centres that conducted the test and recording brilliantly, adhering accurately to the correct order and instructions. Such centres had highly trained professional teachers and these centres should be congratulated.

Grade Boundaries

Raw Mark boundaries

Max Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
50	45	40	35	30	25	20	15	10

Uniform Mark Scale boundaries

Max Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
80	72	64	56	48	40	32	24	16

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